ED198592

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

CG 020 795

Interviews in the field of interpersonal communication reflects a concern with self-analysis, developing theory, collecting information and discovering a satisfactory definition of the field. In reading the literature, I have gained from a fresh critical assessment of the underdeveloped state of research and theory to an optimistic view based on the emerging consensus about fruitful directions for further study. My purpose in this paper is to review selected interpersonal communication by moving from a focus on "what's wrong" or "where are we going" or "are we" being about the social changes.

There is a consensus among researchers in the field regarding the present lack of theory and methodology. Therefore, I want to discuss how to develop a theory that simultaneously provides explanation, direction and practical information. I agree with Goldhaber and Rickida (1979) that we "need to begin researching theories of interpersonal communication" (p. 15) but I also believe that it is impressive to begin at the beginning.

Dixon and Dixon's (1977) model of developing grounded theory can put us on another way to beginning. This model proposes a methodological framework for:

(1) developing theory and discovering research in a systematic fashion in any field of inquiry,

(2) developing theory and a set of concepts that is precise, concise and accessible to practitioners, and

(3) developing theory that encourages proper verification and modification of interpersonal communication.

In this paper I will discuss criticisms of interpersonal communication and theory to date (previous research issues, particularly in need for inquiry, issues which may be basis of future interpersonal communication). Then, I will describe grounded theory and theory issues and implications of this model for the field of interpersonal communication.

[illegible]

As a field of study, [illegible] is a process, normally 10 years old and [illegible]. Nevertheless, practitioners have been making [illegible] without adequate [illegible]. Dick (1978) and Reiser (1977) have recognized the lack of information that could enable practitioners to increase effectiveness. However, little research has been directed toward solving practical problems.

Part of the difficulty in [illegible] is conceptual: a [illegible] of the field is elusive, [illegible]. Reiser (1977) and Goldhaber and Kobitzsch (1978) report a growing interest in definitions, but a lack of a [illegible]. Without such a [illegible], it is difficult for us to systematically develop theory and to isolate [illegible] as a unique field of study. How, for example, can we do [illegible] research studies that [illegible] could be placed if we cannot establish [illegible] variables? Reiser (1979) says the person part of the problem rests with the misleading [illegible]. The starting point for a definition and a discussion of [illegible], as well as a program like [illegible], should be rooted in the [illegible]. However, [illegible] for [illegible] has created [illegible] in [illegible] of [illegible] for [illegible] required in [illegible]. Two [illegible] should be of particular interest to [illegible]: 1) the [illegible], 2) the [illegible] of it in practice with study, 3) the [illegible], and 4) the [illegible] of [illegible].

[illegible] communication is a young field, most of its theorists and researchers received their training in other areas. To imported social science theories and other models as part of their intellectual traditions from the areas of their training. Some of these theories & research paradigms have been criticized for their failure to perform as model in the social sciences (O'Keefe, 1975; Delia[illegible], 1973; Redding, [illegible], 1972). Similar criticism has been evident in the area of interpersonal communication (Bostrom, 1970; Hunt, 1970).

For example, the cognition-precision model employed in social sciences are predominantly linear/causal models which cannot encompass or parts of the world. This reductionistic tendency is inadequate to deal with the complex, processual nature of communication (Redding, R; Hunt, 1972). Hunt (1970) suggests that we may have to discard traditional and unidirectional causality models for models that focus on dialectic/transactional models that are more complex, relate to information, & tolerate multiple explanations of phenomena are more appropriate to the study of communication (Delia, 1972).

Ignoring these, reductionistic models from the physical sciences are the most established social sciences often relied on (& have been most used). Theories are models developed from transactional approach are good model for study of transactional variables. These have been proposed by research scholars as descriptive maps of human relations (Bostrom, 1972). Several theories explicitly provide basic ideas to guide researching and offer basic direction in getting research. A (1972) proved an idea of "an observer cognition to guide the actions and evaluation of ideas in transactional communication research" (p. 72).

Directly related to the use of theory and methodology is the source of hypotheses themselves. In the empiricist-positivist paradigm hypotheses are deductively generated from the theory. These hypotheses are directed and limited by the theory and are nomological; that is, they are derived logically and are actioned for testing on the presumption or appearance of being true (Nelson, 1973). Nelson (1973) suggests that scientific investigation is reduced to theory verification with an emphasis on demonstrating truth rather than testing truth.

The tendency to base theory development solely upon deductive hypotheses to instruct in exploratory areas. When deducing hypotheses, we often make tentative judgments solely from what the evidence indicates on its surface. We tend to build theory upon those studies that support our particular reasoning, even when the evidence base may be flawed conceptually or methodologically. Jones' (1979) discussion of his personal historical investigations is a timely reminder not to drift prematurely but rife to methods that only validate or deductively derived hypotheses by modification.

Finally, the empiricism-positivistic paradigm aids in objectivity while failing to acknowledge the subjective interest of the theorist/researcher into the process of developing theory. Dubbing (1978), in a penetrating discussion of organizational communication, points up the effects of ideology in theory development (regardless of whether or not it is acknowledged). Gouldner and Peabody (1978) have accepted that ideologies impose concepts derived from theories in the study of organizational communication. However, Hage (1972) identified several issues underlying social conceptualizations of theory development, issues which are usually accepted but unacknowledged which, as Dubbing (1978) suggests, pervade every stage of the research process.

The growing acknowledgement of our premature theorizing about interpersonal communication has led to a call for more descriptive research (Berger, Research, Blake, 1979; Bush, 1977; Bunnell, 1979; Pearce, 1972; Farrell, 1979; Pearce, 1976; Smith, 1977). However, while description may be required for the initial stages of research, it is not sufficient for theory development. Description does not necessarily lead to explanative theory, nor does it necessarily enhance pedagogy. Descriptive studies may be ungeneralizable and unrepresentative or restricted to single cases. Such studies may provide insights or interesting comments but still not contribute directly to theory development. In addition, descriptive data may be directed at validating existent theories rather than generating new hypotheses. If descriptive research is to be valuable in developing useful research information, methods used in descriptive must be specifically oriented toward theory development.

Not all scholars agree that description is the answer to the lack of theory development in interpersonal communication. Kaplowitz and Fink (1979) appear to take a position contrary to those recommending elementary, descriptive research. They suggest that "to purposefully ignore theorizing will hinder the development of the field" (p. 11). I agree with Kaplowitz and Fink, but see no particular need to emphasize theorizing over description or vice versa. My position is that theorizing and description can occur simultaneously. However, a model that can indirectly connect theory to description of interpersonal communication can provide theories capable of explaining how ordinary people function.

Grounded Theory

Qualitative methods, participant observation and Grounded Theory have often been used synonymously. However, there are some useful distinctions

among them Bogdan and Taylor (1975) use the term qualitative to indicate subjective participation with data collection. They say "qualitative methodologies refer to research procedures which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (p. 4). Van Maanen (1979) suggests that the qualitative method is an umbrella term without precise meaning. It describes many types of techniques "which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p. 520).

Participant observation describes a particular method of obtaining qualitative data. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) say that participant observation is "characterized by a period of intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects, in the milieu of the latter. During this period, data are unobtrusively and systematically collected" (p. 5). Schatzman and Strauss (1973) see participant observation as a more general method. They say that participant observation is "a characteristic blend or combination of methods and techniques" (p. 5). These techniques include direct observation, direct participation, interviewing and document analysis.

Participant observation, whether considered a specific technique or a general method that includes different techniques, in empirical data collection (Bruyn, 1966). The researcher typically enters into the investigation with not a priori hypotheses and specified variables. Through the researcher's subjective immersion in the phenomena of study, variables are identified and hypotheses generated.

Theory, however, does not evolve automatically from the data, but rather is generated through the process of analytic induction. Grounded theory is a method of analytic induction. The Grounded Theory approach

typically (it not necessarily) relies upon participant observation methodology and design. Grounded Theory has a unique information processing style aimed specifically at systematically generating theory through constant comparative analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Glaser(1969, 1978) discusses three types of analytic induction. The first approach relies on generating ideas or theories through unsystematic, impressionistic contact with the data. The researcher inspects and codes the data initively. Categories or theories are not systematically verified and therefore remain descriptive and impressionistic.

In the second approach, termed overall grounding, hypotheses are generated from the initial impressionistic inspection of data and then subjected to verification. Explicit coding is conducted to verify the hypotheses generated from the data. Bulmer and Simmons (1967) say that the 'grounded' hypotheses is to modified or verified through case studies. Bulmer and Simmons (19) and Glaser (1969, 1978) recognize that this approach limits what is sought. Once hypotheses are formed, the only cases examined are those in wh phenomena relating to the hypotheses are formed. Cases where the phenom do not occur are excluded (Bulmer and Simmons, 1969). The initial initive and creative process moves rapidly from hypothesis generation to hypothesis verification which then controls subsequent sampling and data collection. Consequently, hypotheses are verified and remain grounded in the datum remain few in number as well. In addition, while the method is more systematic than the impressionistic analysis, it is limited in scope and generality.

The 3rd type of analytic induction, Grounded Theory, combines the first two in a single method directed at theory generation. The process of generating hypotheses, testing hypotheses, collecting data, integrating

categories and constructing theory occur simultaneously and are "guided and integrated by the emerging theory" (Glaser, 1978, p. 2). Typically, the researcher compares data and identifies similarities and differences from which abstract categories and their properties are generated. Familiarity through comparison of similarities and differences among categories and properties suggests to the researcher hypotheses about relationships, which he or she records and later verifies by further data collection and comparison. Concepts, categories and hypotheses are constantly verified, added to, or modified as more data are collected in such a scheme. As the researcher is working with the data to verify theory, he or she is forced to reduce the amount and diversity of the data. "To make theoretical sense of so much diversity in his data, the analyst is forced to develop ideas on a level of generality higher in conceptual abstraction than the qualitative material being analyzed. He is forced to bring out underlying uniformities and dimensions and use more abstract concepts to account for differences in data" (Glaser and Strauss, p. 114).

The emphasis on generating theory, through constant comparisons rather than verifying hypotheses, results in multiple hypotheses about general phenomena (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Description and interpretation are not restricted to single cases but are more general explanations of phenomena. Grounded theory, therefore, can account for complex behavior in complex situations. Consequently, the emergent theory is "integrated, consistent, plausible, close to the data" (Glaser, 1965, p. 118).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) identify four interrelated properties of grounded theory that make it accessible for application by practitioners. First, since the theory was developed from direct contact with the data, it fits the data better than deductively derived theories which are imposed from

a priori premises. Second, Grounded Theory is attractive because its postulates parallel natural human processing, albeit under strict procedural conditions. Third, it works. That is, in grounded theory, variables can be identified and predictions about the relationships and outcomes can be made. Since the theory has been constantly verified as it develops, the theorist has been forced to be pragmatic. Finally, the Grounded Theory is flexible and modifiable. It is a process of constantly verifying hypotheses and of evolving descriptions and interpretations as new data are collected. Application serves to further test and validate the theory and force the roles of practitioner and theorist to merge.

Recent studies (Blackman, 1978, 1979; Browning, 1978; Harper and Ashling, 1980) demonstrate the utility of Grounded Theory. Browning (1978) used Grounded Theory to study hierarchy in a government agency. He began the study by intentionally avoiding reviewing and interpreting literature and formulating hypotheses. Instead, he initiated his investigation with the goal of describing "how individuals communicate interpersonally in an organizational setting," and "what variables influence the ways individuals communicate" (p. 93). By using the constant comparative methods of analysis on data gathered through interviews and direct observation, Browning obtained 24 categories and 36 propositions clustered under three grand theoretical power concepts.

Blackman (1978) used Grounded Theory in the investigation of Iranian and American intercultural communication in public forums. The study began with four broad questions.

1. What is the nature and type of behavior exhibited by Iranian students in public forums where they are attempting to influence Americans?

2. What is the nature and character of the interactions between Iranian and American students?

3. What is the nature and character of American reactions to Iranian behavior and attempts at persuasion and information dissemination?

4. What are the sources of misunderstanding between Iranian and American students? (p. 5)

Data were collected through participant observation, interviewing and document analysis. Once categories and hypotheses were established through the comparative analysis, a literature review of Iranian culture was conducted and compared with the emerging theory. After one year, a field experiment was conducted to further substantiate the emergent hypotheses. The results describe and interpret several interdependent characteristics of Iranian behavior as well as several ways in which Americans interpret Iranian behavior. In addition, three critical features were proposed that consistently contributed to communication problems between the two cultures.

Implications of Grounded Theory for Intercultural Communication

In each of these studies, the researchers recognized the subjective nature of the research and attempted to control for it by limiting initial presuppositions and hypotheses, consistently reporting their thoughts and impressions in their notes and by employing convergent or multiple methods to decrease the limitations of any single method. In addition to the benefit derived from the control of researcher bias, intercultural communication theory can benefit when researcher bias is studied directly. In the Grounded Theory method, the researcher reacts holistically to the research content and creates and organizes categories and a framework through the constant/comparative process. When the researcher begins to identify concepts and to make connections between them, he is "no longer a passive receiver of

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]